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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement is critical to a child's success in school. This handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum in Catholic schools in Alberta, Canada. Based on the Alberta Education "Program of Studies: Junior High Schools," the handbook describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes Catholic school students in Alberta are expected to demonstrate when they have completed the Grade 8 curriculum, including samples of what students are expected to learn in each subject. Following introductory material, sections include: (1) "What Is Curriculum?"; (2) "Religious Education";(3) "Language Arts"; (4) "Mathematics"; (5) "Science"; (6) "Social Studies"; (7) "Physical Education"; (8) "Health and Personal Life Skills"; (9) "Complementary Courses," including Career and Technology Studies, Fine and Performing Arts, and Languages Other Than English; and (10) "French Immersion." The handbook concludes with a one-page questionnaire asking for feedback on the handbook. (LPP)

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Curriculum Handbook *for* Parents

1997–1998

Catholic School Version

GRADE EIGHT 8

PS 025737

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Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

1997–1998

Catholic School Version

GRADE **8**

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Message from the
Minister of Education

While students are at the centre of the education system, you, as parents are a vital partner. Your involvement in your child's education is critical to his or her success. To be the pathfinder, to help your child, you need to know what s/he is learning and when.

The *Curriculum Handbook for Parents* series is your guide to each stage of learning. It is a clear outline of what we expect our students to learn at each stage of their education. When you know what is expected at school, you can provide the home support students need. By reading about what your student is learning at school and discussing it at home, you do more than learn what is happening at school. You show your child that you value education.

This is the second edition of the handbook series. It reflects suggestions of parents, teachers and other education partners. I would like to thank those people whose comments helped us improve this edition.

I also would like to thank the eight school boards who worked on the development of the original handbooks – Edmonton Public, Edmonton Separate, Elk Island, Sturgeon, St. Albert Protestant, Greater St. Albert Catholic, Sherwood Park Separate and Black Gold.

Gary G. Mar, Q.C.
Minister of Education
M.L.A., Calgary Nose Creek

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, I welcome this opportunity to affirm you in your role as parents in the education of your children and wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Alberta and Alberta Education for this **Curriculum Handbook for Parents**.

The Church has always recognized with confidence that you, parents, are the first and primary educators of your children, especially with regards to education in the faith. This is a noble, yet challenging calling that is rightfully yours. Today, therefore, because of the many diverse pressures and influences on our children, your role is vital in working with our schools to continue to provide the best possible education for our children. To those of you who have entrusted your children to a Catholic school be assured that it is with great respect for these facts that we support you in your role. I encourage you to work closely with our Catholic schools by joining the newly formed School Councils or existing parent groups. Be a strong voice for the Catholic identity of schools. In this regard, you will share in a concrete and invaluable way in the central mission of the Church which is to proclaim Jesus and his Gospel in the world today and, in so doing, hand on our faith to our children.

I commend Alberta Education for providing parents with this practical Curriculum Handbook. It is a clear presentation of what parents can expect of our Alberta schools (Public and Catholic) and by its very existence also acknowledges how important you are as parents in your children's education. In it, you will find a comprehensive presentation of the content and expected learning outcomes for your children in all subject areas. This includes an overview of the content and expectations of the Religious Education Program written and approved by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It reflects the essential character of Catholic schools as communities of learning where as an old friend wrote: "... God, God's truth and God's life are integrated into the entire syllabus, curriculum and life of the school."

Let us continue to grow into Christ.

J. H. MacNeil
Archbishop of Edmonton
President, Alberta Bishops' Conference

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Introduction to the Grade 8 Handbook

This handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum—the knowledge, skills and attitudes students in Alberta are expected to demonstrate when they have completed the Grade 8 curriculum. It is based on the Alberta Education *Program of Studies: Junior High Schools*. The handbook includes samples of what students are expected to learn in each subject. The complete curriculum for Grade 8 is available in all Alberta junior high schools.

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Introduction

TO THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Alberta Education specifies what all students in Grade 7 to Grade 9 are expected to learn and be able to do. The curriculum is organized into separate subjects or course areas and is designed to enable teachers to make connections across subjects, and to develop programming that accommodates a range of student needs. We expect that teaching methods and schedules will vary from school to school and from class to class to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

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What Is Curriculum?

Curriculum describes what students are expected to learn. In Alberta, curriculum is developed by Alberta Education and is described in documents called programs of study for elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

The curriculum specifies what all students in the province are expected to learn in each subject area at each grade level. It is developed by Alberta Education in consultation with teachers, administrators, parents, representatives from post-secondary institutions, and professional and community groups.

Within the context of Catholic schools, the curriculum in all of its aspects—content, the teaching process, and the total school environment— reflects the values of faith, hope, charity, forgiveness and justice as found in the gospels and the message of Jesus Christ as understood by the Catholic church.

Teachers are responsible for using the curriculum to plan their teaching activities and set appropriate levels of challenge according to students' learning needs and abilities. Teachers regularly assess student progress and report to parents, students and school administrators.

As well as being assessed by their teachers, students write provincial achievement tests in grades 3, 6 and 9. Grade 3 students write achievement tests in language arts and mathematics. Grades 6 and 9 students write achievement tests in language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. The results of these achievement tests are provided to school boards and schools. Parents may ask for their child's test results at their local school.

Information about provincial achievement testing in grades 3, 6 and 9 is provided in an Alberta Education publication called, *Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing*. Individual guides for Grade 3 and for Grade 6 are available in elementary schools. The Grade 9 guide is available in junior high schools. The publications also may be obtained from Alberta Education's Student Evaluation Branch by calling 403–427–0010 or, outside of Edmonton, dial 310–0000 to be connected toll free.

In Catholic schools there are many opportunities for integrating gospel values and nurturing the presence of God in our midst within the curriculum. Teachers will determine where religious education and church teaching can be integrated with other subjects.

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Religious Education

Religious education is an essential and integral part of the life and culture of a Catholic school. Through it, students are invited to develop the knowledge, beliefs, skills, values and attitudes needed to build a relationship with God and community through the person of Jesus Christ. Religious education shares the same goals and objectives set forth for all good education, that is, the growth and development of the whole person in all his or her dimensions—physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

Religious education has four essential characteristics.

It is **Trinitarian**. It recognizes God as the creator of all things who gives us Jesus. It is Jesus who reveals God to us, and in turn reveals God's Spirit, through whom we understand our faith.

It is based on **Sacred Scripture** through which we hear the mystery of God revealed, the call to be in relationship with God and each other, and we learn how to pray.

It is based on the **life experience** of the students through which they are invited to discern signs of God in their daily lives.

It is presented within the tradition of the **Catholic faith community** which, based on Church teachings, sacramental and liturgical life, provides students with experiences of faith, prayer, love and justice.

With an awareness of the uniqueness of each student and a recognition that religious development takes place through a process of stages and within a community, it is expected that program presentation will vary from place to place to meet the diverse learning and religious formation needs of all students.

Religious Education Programs for elementary and junior high schools are authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese. Some school districts have developed supplementary resources and adapted the program to better meet local needs.

Building on the scriptural themes of Grade 7, the Grade 8 program focuses students' attention on the person of Jesus Christ, revealed as the fullness and perfect image of God. The students reflect on the last part of the Apostles' Creed which is studied as the summation of the faith that has been handed onto us through the Church. They study key aspects of the Sacraments and reflect on the Ten Commandments. They are invited to a meaningful life based on gospel values and morality, a call to hope and personal faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through a study of the various forms of prayer and sacramental celebrations, students are encouraged to make life-affirming choices as a response to Jesus' invitation to live a life of love and service.

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The students explore these themes through the study of 8 units:

Unit 1. God's action among us.

The students are encouraged to broaden their understanding of sacramentality, deepen their awareness of God's presence in signs, symbols and ritual, and explore the meaning of referring to Jesus and the Church as sacrament.

Unit 2. Alive in Christ.

The students are invited to understand that we, the people of God, are the Church, alive in Christ and that Christ is alive in us. They reflect on Jesus as the perfect image of God and on the Church as a sign of Christ in the world. They explore the Church as the family of God, the body of Christ, servant, and communion of saints. They study the Sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Unit 3. The God who sets us free: an introduction to Gospel morality.

The students explore how their life of grace develops as a result of their decisions. They reflect on Gospel morality, the 1st and 2nd commandments, and learn a decision-making process. They reflect on sin and forgiveness, and on the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Unit 4. A God so close (Advent).

The students are invited into the season of Advent to explore the longings of their hearts, and to reflect on God's promise: "I am with you". They reflect on the meaning and tradition of praying the Rosary.

Unit 5. Respect for life.

The students examine and appreciate the goodness of all creation, and especially of human life. They explore life issues related to the 5th commandment, and learn about the Sacrament of the Sick.

Unit 6. We respect the dignity of others.

The students consider the implications of Christian teaching for economic issues in their lives and in society. They are invited to respect the dignity of others, ponder the importance of 'work' and reflect on the social teaching of the Church in light of the 7th and 10th commandments.

Unit 7. "Do this in memory of me" (end of Lent and Easter).

The students are invited to recognize, in the actions and words of the eucharist, God's salvation at work through Jesus. They study the liturgical calendar and the structure of the Celebration of the Eucharist (the Mass). They reflect on the sacrament of orders and authority in the church. They explore the meaning of the 3rd commandment.

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Unit 8. The deepest human relationships from a Christian point of view.

The students explore their deepest relationships from a Christian point of view. They explore life in the family, the gift of truth, friendship, sexuality and Christian Marriage in light of the gospel and of the 4th, 6th, 8th and 9th commandments.

As a result of participation in this program, students will:

- demonstrate a familiarity with and an ability to retell key biblical narratives that illustrate God's faithful relationship with a chosen people and the community's response to this relationship
- express connections between the relationships described in biblical events and their own life experiences
- show reverence for Scripture as God's living Word
- define human dignity and express its significance in Christian faith and practice
- name the articles of the Apostles' Creed as a summary expression of the Christian community's relationship with God and articulate some of the meaning of each article
- communicate their faith in ways that show a genuine understanding of the Apostles' Creed
- describe how the Creed is a summary of the faith community's understanding of who God is
- explain how the Creed calls them to make responsible choices and decisions in their everyday lives
- analyze (critique) events and personal decisions in light of a commitment to follow Jesus
- describe the relationship between real-life situations and the baptismal commitment to follow Jesus in the community of the Holy Spirit
- outline the ways that prayer deepens a relationship with God
- pray, using a variety of prayer styles
- participate in traditional forms of Catholic prayer.

The school, through the Religious Education Program, complements parents in their role as primary and principal educators of their children. Home and family play a vitally important role in the faith development of children. Within the family, seeds of faith are planted. Family relationships and daily experiences are major factors in shaping a child's values, attitudes and Catholic identity. Regular religious practice and the application of classroom learning to daily life are critical parts of religious formation.

Prayer is an integral part of the Religious Education Program and of each school day since intimacy with God is the ultimate goal of Catechesis. Respecting the individual differences of children and our changing human needs, prayer is experienced in many different ways: silent reflection, guided imagery, scriptural prayer, song and formal community prayer. As we enter into prayer, we give praise and thanks for God's loving presence and call upon the Spirit to guide, nourish and empower our lives through Jesus Christ.

Teaching the sacraments occurs within each of the Religious Education Programs. Sacraments celebrate the presence of Christ in our lives. They are effective signs that make God's grace present to

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us in love, healing and the transformation of our lives. Eucharist and Reconciliation are an essential part of each child's religious formation and a necessary grounding for a mature faith. As with many basic themes, Eucharist and Reconciliation are introduced in Grade 1, but continue to be deepened and intensified in each year thereafter. Children who have not yet celebrated First Communion or First Reconciliation are always welcome to contact their parish to begin their immediate preparation for the sacraments.

The Religious Education Program interprets for the students what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches about our faith in a manner appropriate to the age and development of the students. Not everything in the Catechism is incorporated because, as the Catechism itself points out, what is taught must be adapted to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial conditions among all those to whom it is addressed" (#24). Specific excerpts are quoted at the end of each theme for the teacher to help root the contents and activities of the theme in Church tradition.

The Religious Education Program is structured around the church liturgical year. This enables students to live and express faith in an integrated way at school, at home and in the parish community.

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Language Arts

In language arts, students will demonstrate increasing confidence in their abilities and competence in their use of language. Language arts emphasizes the lifelong application of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. The five strands are interrelated and enable students to communicate ideas and feelings, develop critical thinking skills, and contribute to their social and personal growth. The five language arts strands are integrated in a variety of themes and units. From grade to grade, students extend and refine the language skills they have already learned. Opportunities are provided for students to practise those skills in new contexts, using more challenging learning materials.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the language arts curriculum are integrated with other subject areas, including religious education, and reflect the Catholic identity of the school.

Reading

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- locate, evaluate, organize and present information from three to five different sources
- notice that new words can be developed, using prefixes and suffixes
- detect prejudice, bias and stereotyping in written text
- read stories and poems from various cultures represented in their community.

Writing

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- keep lists of ideas for writing
- use a variety of strategies to record and organize ideas
- write clear and effective expository articles, letters and reports
- write from more than one point of view
- use colon and semicolon to punctuate written communication.

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Listening

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- listen to a variety of poems
- analyze and compare written and spoken presentations for consistency, point of view and support for opinion
- apply a variety of listening strategies in attempting to understand another person's point of view
- use verbal and nonverbal cues to interpret relationship between or among speakers.

Speaking

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- discuss the reasons for selecting a particular piece of literature
- explain why they liked or did not like something they have read
- participate in oral readings, readers' theatre and debate
- demonstrate increased confidence when presenting an oral interpretation of a literature selection
- give prepared presentations from notes or memory.

Viewing

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- explain the contribution of structural elements to the meaning of a visual message
- evaluate the effectiveness of a visual message
- collaborate with peers to create a variety of visual messages
- explain their preference for the written or visual presentation of a story, drama or novel.

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Mathematics

Mathematics is a common human activity, increasing in importance in a rapidly advancing, technological society. A greater proficiency in using mathematics increases the opportunities available to individuals. Students need to become mathematically literate in order to explore problem-solving situations.

At all levels, students benefit from working with appropriate materials, tools and contexts when constructing personal meaning about new mathematical ideas.

The main goals of mathematics education are to prepare students to:

- use mathematics confidently to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society.

As students acquire the specified outcomes, they will also be expected to use the following seven mathematical processes:

Communication
Connections
Estimation and Mental Mathematics
Problem Solving
Reasoning
Technology
Visualization.

The mathematics content is organized into four strands:

Number
Patterns and Relations
Shape and Space
Statistics and Probability.

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Number

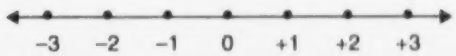
By the end of Grade 8, students will:

◆ Demonstrate a number sense for whole numbers 0 to 10 000, and explore proper fractions.

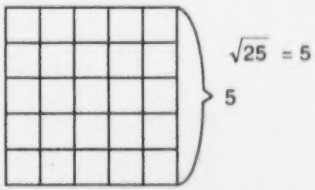
Sample Student Tasks

- The diameter of a human hair is 0.000 07 m. Write this number in scientific notation, using metres as the unit of measure. What is the diameter in centimetres?
- Explain where you would place each of the following numbers on the number line.

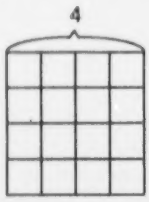
$+1.75, -1.2, -\frac{6}{5}, +\frac{2}{3}$



- A recipe calls for 250 mL of sugar, 500 mL of oatmeal and 750 mL of flour. Write the amounts of ingredients as a ratio. Write another equivalent ratio.
- Shamin used small square tiles to form larger squares as a way of finding the square roots of 25 and 16.



$\sqrt{25} = 5$



$\sqrt{16} = 4$

Use Shamin's method to show the square roots of 36, 49, 64 and 100.

◆ Apply arithmetic operations on rational numbers to solve problems.

Sample Student Tasks

- Lisa had $\frac{3}{4}$ of a large candy bar. She gave $\frac{1}{3}$ of what she had to Shannon. Explain how you know that Shannon got less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of a whole bar, by:

  multiplying $\frac{1}{3} \times \frac{3}{4}$, using a pencil and paper method

  explaining your method and your answer by folding a piece of paper that represents a whole candy bar.

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- Miko has $2\frac{1}{2}$ m of blue cloth. How many pieces $\frac{1}{4}$ m long can she cut from her piece? Estimate the answer and explain the solution by:

  dividing $2\frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$, using a pencil and paper method

  using Cuisenaire rods to explain your method and your answer.

◆ Apply the concepts of rate, ratio, percentage and proportion to solve problems in meaningful contexts.

Sample Student Tasks

- Have you read, or heard of, the book by Jonathan Swift called *Gulliver's Travels*? Gulliver, a ship captain, suffers a shipwreck, and finds himself in the land of Lilliput. Here he finds that the heights of the people, plants and animals are in a 1:12 ratio to the heights of the people, plants and animals in his world. Use the measuring tape to measure yourself. Then complete this chart.

Body Part	Actual Length	Length in Lilliput
Length of middle finger		
Length of your foot		
Your choice		

  Each day the Emperor of Lilliput gave Gulliver the food and drink necessary to feed about 1 728 Lilliputians. How did the Emperor's mathematicians arrive at this number? Explain why this should be about the right amount.

- Which is the better buy: 1.2 L orange juice for $2.50 or 0.75 L orange juice for $1.40?
- Suits selling regularly for $185.00 were marked down by 25%. To further improve sales, the discount price was reduced by another 15%. What was the final selling price? What was the total per cent of discount on the original price?
- In Canada, there are 1 million curlers registered in 1200 clubs. In Scotland, there are 50 000 curlers in 52 clubs, and in Sweden there are 9000 curlers in 36 clubs. Write a ratio for each to compare the number of curlers to the number of clubs, and arrange these in order of size from least to greatest.

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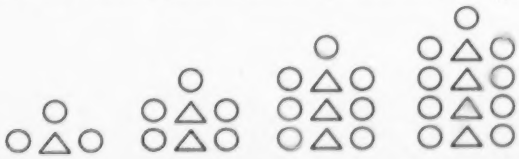
Patterns and Relations

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

◆ Use patterns, variables and expressions, together with their graphs, to solve problems.

Sample Student Tasks

- Long-Foi made the following pictures with circles and triangles.



He started making a chart to show the number of circles and triangles in each picture.

Picture	Number of Circles	Number of Triangles
1	3	1
2	5	2
3		
4		

Complete Long-Foi's chart and look for a pattern.
Write a mathematics sentence to show the relationship between the number of circles and the number of triangles.
Make concrete models or pictures to verify your answers.
How many circles would you need in a picture with 12 triangles?
How can you find and verify the answer?
Substitute numbers in your sentence for each picture.

- Describe the following algebraic equation in words.

$$\frac{x}{2} + 5 = x + 2$$

◆ Solve and verify one-step and two-step linear equations with rational number solutions.

Sample Student Tasks

- Kassidy bought five CDs at the same price each and paid a total of $84.45. How much did each CD cost?

Write an equation, and show how to solve it algebraically.
Verify your answer by substituting it in your equation.

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Shape and Space

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Apply indirect measurement procedures to solve problems.

Sample Student Tasks

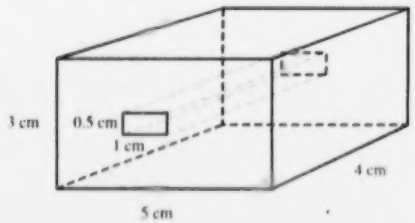
- Jamie wants to walk from one corner of the rectangular playground to the opposite corner. The playground is 30 m by 50 m. What is the shortest route he can take? Explain.

- Generalize measurement patterns and procedures, and solve problems involving area, perimeter, surface area and volume.

Sample Student Tasks

- You want to paint one wall of your room. The wall is 7.0 m long and 2.4 m high. It takes one small can of paint to cover 9 m^2 and the paint sells for $3.99 a can.
  What would it cost you, if you purchase only paint?
  What else do you need to think of?
  Make a plan for your trip to the store for supplies for this painting job.

- First estimate, and then find, the volume and the surface area of the figure below. The figure is a 3 cm × 4 cm × 5 cm solid block of wood with a 1 cm × 0.5 cm × 4 cm hole cut in it.



- Link angle measures and the properties of parallel lines to the classification and properties of quadrilaterals.

Sample Student Tasks

- Identify, compare and debate the merits of shape in present and past architectural construction methods and decoration features; e.g., golden rectangle.

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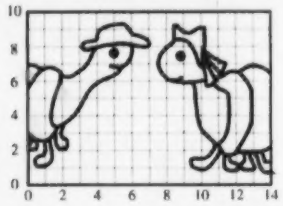
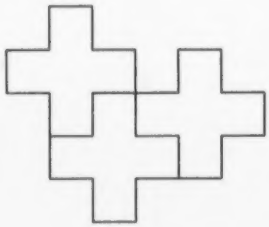
- Create and analyze design problems and architectural patterns, using the properties of scaling, proportion and networks.

Sample Student Tasks

- If the following figure is drawn on 1 cm grid paper, draw its enlargement on 2 cm grid paper.



- The four-colour map theorem says that any flat map, no matter how many separate regions it has, can be coloured using only four colours, so that no bordering regions are the same colour. Cover a page with a design like the one shown, and test the theorem. Also test the theorem with a real map, such as that of Canada, the United States or Europe.



Statistics and Probability

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Develop and implement a plan for the collection, display and analysis of data, using technology, as required.

Sample Student Tasks

- Using published data, find the life expectancy for females of 20 different countries. Graph the results, using a box and whisker plot.

- Evaluate and use measures of central tendency and variability.

Sample Student Tasks

- The mean score on a test was 5. The median was also 5, but the mode was 6. The 13 scores ranged from 2 to 10.
  Construct a set of scores that have the above measures.
  Represent each score with centicubes or unifix to show the measures concretely.
  Another score of 15 is added to the data. How will this affect each of the above measures?

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◆ Compare theoretical and experimental probability of independent events.

Sample Student Tasks

- What is the probability of having exactly two boys in a family of five children? Design a simulation, using coins to answer the question.

Science

In science, students develop knowledge and skills that help them understand and interpret the world around them. At each level of the junior high program, students learn basic concepts from earth, physical and life sciences, and are challenged to apply what they have learned. Through their studies, students are expected to develop skills of inquiry and experimentation, skills of solving practical problems, and skills of finding and evaluating information. In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of stewardship, morals and ethics, and Catholic teaching can be integrated appropriately into the science curriculum.

The Grade 8 science program consists of six units. Each unit focuses on a particular topic and develops three common themes:

- Nature of Science
- Science and Technology
- Science, Technology and Society.

The six units of study are:

- Solutions and Substances
- Energy and Machines
- Consumer Product Testing
- The Earth's Crust
- Growing Plants
- Interactions and Environments.

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Solutions and Substances

Students are introduced to the examination of substances and solutions.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- tell the difference between a variety of substances and solutions both in natural and man-made materials; for example, tell the difference between a salt solution and a container of pure water
- observe, measure and describe properties of matter, mixtures and solutions; for example, describe a material as clear, translucent or opaque
- recognize, compare and describe the solubility and rate of dissolving materials; for example, salt, alum and sugar
- describe and carry out specific techniques to separate solutions; for example, settling, filtration, evaporation, distillation and crystallization.

Energy and Machines

Students study mechanical systems, focusing on their efficiency and effectiveness.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify the parts of a simple mechanical device and a mechanical subsystem
- describe the operation and application of a simple mechanical system
- compare alternative design of a mechanical device; for example, compare propulsion systems in toy cars
- identify the source of power and linkages within a mechanical system
- identify mechanical design changes that improve efficiency and reduce friction.

Consumer Product Testing

Students study consumer product testing, focusing on the need for safe, reliable and effective products.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify product characteristics which might be considered in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a product; for example, identify safety characteristics of a bicycle helmet
- describe how product testing provides valuable information to manufacturers and consumers
- explain the importance of safety and quality standards for consumer goods
- make sample consumer decisions considering many alternatives and their implications; for example, evaluate household cleaners based on information about their cleaning properties and about their effect on the environment.

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The Earth's Crust

Students investigate features of the Earth's crust that can be interpreted by examining earth materials and formations.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- interpret evidence of major earth changes found through ongoing changes of surface features
- interpret a variety of characteristics in rocks and minerals to determine how and where they were formed
- interpret rock formations to provide explanations for earth changes.

Growing Plants

Students learn about the general features of plants, their structures and functions. This knowledge is applied to specific applications for enhanced plant growth and propagation.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe how plant breeding leads to the development of plants with specialized characteristics; for example, the development of tomato plants with a short growing season
- describe the different functions of plant structures
- compare plant growth and reproduction by manipulating growth conditions
- interpret the environmental consequences of controlling plant pests and diseases.

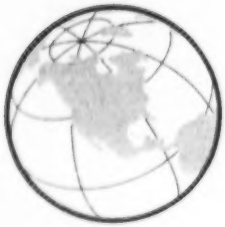
Interactions and Environments

Students study living things in relationship to the environment in which the living things exist.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe an environment with nonliving characteristics
- interpret the interdependence, food chain relationships and energy flows within an ecosystem
- predict how changes to the environment may have intended and/or unintended consequences.

Social Studies



Social studies helps students learn basic knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become responsible citizens and contributing members of society. Social studies includes the study of history, geography, economics, the behavioural sciences and humanities. Grade 8 social studies focuses on people and their society and how they interact with their environment. The content is organized around three topics that serve as the context for developing important skills and attitudes. In each topic, students are expected to address at least one issue and one question for inquiry. Suggestions for this inquiry are provided within the curriculum.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of social justice, the contribution of the Church to community (locally and globally), and Church teaching can be integrated appropriately into the social studies curriculum.

Three topics are identified for Grade 8.

Geography of Canada and the United States

Students develop an understanding of the relationship of geography to patterns of life in Canada and the United States. Students will study the geography of the two countries.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify and define the terms regions, location and movement
- understand that people are constantly interacting with their physical environment to meet their needs
- understand that the environment is constantly being changed by human and physical forces
- understand that all places have special human and physical characteristics
- construct maps demonstrating use of symbols, location, direction, distance, scale and physical geography
- categorize information to develop concepts
- appreciate interdependence as a common feature of life
- cooperate and work with others willingly.

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Canada: History to the Twentieth Century

Students develop a greater understanding of the historical development of Canada to the present century.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- understand that colonization was one result of competition between nations for new territory
- explain the process of Canada's growth and expansion
- construct a timeline of major events and contributions of individuals that shaped the political development of Canada
- read and interpret historical maps
- develop respect for democratic principles
- consider opinions and interpretations different from their own.

South America: A Case Study of Brazil

Students develop an understanding of the physical and human geography of Brazil over time.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify the major physical features of Brazil
- explain how immigration and settlement patterns have shaped the historical and cultural development of Brazil
- understand the effect human settlement has had on Brazil's physical environment
- understand how the culture of Brazil reflects the variety of origins of its people
- compare information drawn from two or more sources
- differentiate between main and related ideas
- develop respect and tolerance for the rights, needs, opinions and concerns of others
- appreciate the consequences of people's interactions with their environment.

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Physical Education

Physical education programs foster active, healthful lifestyles that enable students to recognize the importance of accepting responsibility for their physical, social and emotional well-being. Students in a well-balanced physical education program are expected to be provided with opportunities in seven dimensions of activity: aquatics, dance, fitness, games, gymnastics, individual activities and outdoor pursuits. The expectations for physical education are the same for students in grades 7, 8 and 9. Students are expected to demonstrate increased levels of performance during their three years in junior high school. As well as demonstrating the expectations in the seven activities, students are expected to demonstrate:

- physical skills in a variety of activities
- the practice and theory of physical fitness
- knowledge about physical activity and healthful lifestyles
- positive attitudes toward active living
- positive social skills.

Consideration for exemption from participation in physical education is given for health issues, physical capabilities, religious preferences, cultural preferences and availability of facilities.

Aquatics

Students are expected to:

- feel comfortable and confident in the water
- swim a variety of distances and take part in water games and sports
- understand and use safety and lifesaving skills
- develop appreciation and respect for the water environment.

At least one exposure to a water and water safety program is suggested during the secondary years.

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Dance

Students are expected to:

- develop body and space awareness and quality of movement
- create and perform individual, partner and/or group compositions
- analyze the various elements of rhythmical movement in dance
- appreciate the opportunities for self-expression, creativity, physical fitness and social interaction provided through dance
- appreciate dance as an enjoyable lifetime activity.

Fitness

Students are expected to:

- assess and apply acceptable training principles in designing personal programs to improve cardiorespiratory efficiency, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, body composition and posture
- improve the motor fitness components of agility, balance, coordination, power, reaction time and speed
- plan, monitor and participate in a personal fitness program
- understand the safety precautions common to fitness activities
- understand the relationship of nutrition, rest, relaxation, exercise and sports to physical fitness
- know and apply the principles of first aid.

Games

Students are expected to:

- use sound mechanical principles efficiently in the throwing, catching and holding on to objects in game conditions
- understand rules, etiquette and safety precautions associated with a variety of games
- understand and appreciate etiquette and self-control in game situations
- appreciate the necessity to accept the roles of leader and follower in cooperative and competitive situations
- develop confidence and a desire to attempt new games or activities.

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Gymnastics

Students are expected to:

- perform movements that result in balanced body strength and mobility
- use correct safety techniques where individual and/or cooperative assistance is required
- willingly, participate, as a performer and/or organizer of class events.

Individual Activities

Students are expected to:

- develop basic skills, techniques and forms associated with individual activities
- use acquired physical skills in a variety of individual activities
- monitor self-improvement and set personal goals in various individual activities
- care for the safety, effort and ability of self, partners, officials and instructors
- develop confidence and a desire to try new individual activities.

Outdoor Pursuits

Students are expected to:

- develop the basic skills, techniques and forms associated with outdoor pursuits
- develop an awareness of the natural environment for worthwhile, lifetime outdoor pursuits in all seasons
- develop social skills that promote acceptable standards of behaviour and positive relationships with others
- develop increased confidence, self-sufficiency and individual initiative.

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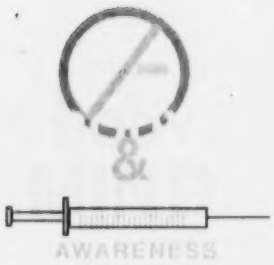
Health and Personal Life Skills



Each person begins life with unique characteristics, capabilities, limitations and the potential to grow as a person. A health program that encompasses the multidimensional nature of the person helps students recognize their potential and become aware of alternatives that will enhance their personal lifestyle.

The Health and Personal Life Skills program encourages the involvement of community agencies. To promote accurate information exchange and to encourage ongoing health education, it is important to involve parents and community resource people in the health program. Health education is a responsibility shared with the home, school and community.

The Health and Personal Life Skills curriculum is arranged around themes. While the themes are repeated throughout the junior high program, the focus and content are different in each grade.

In a Catholic school, these themes are taught within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The local boards of many Catholic school districts have approved supplementary resources and adapted the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students, their families and their faith communities.

Self-awareness and Acceptance

Students are provided the opportunity to develop attitudes of self-awareness and acceptance.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the terms self-concept, culture and stereotyping
- develop appropriate methods to manage feelings and behaviour
- understand how behaviours affect others.

Relating to Others

Students learn that interpersonal relationship skills help individuals make decisions about behaviour that allow them to feel good about themselves and function positively within their environment.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- explain the positive and negative effects of belonging to a group
- describe the functions of family and interpret their role in the family.

Life Careers

Students consider their personal interests, aptitudes and abilities in relation to career awareness and personal career planning.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the relationship between occupation and lifestyle choices
- explain the importance of lifelong career planning
- analyze personal characteristics with respect to possible career options.

Body Knowledge and Care

Students acquire the knowledge and skills to help them make effective decisions and to care for their body.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the importance of nutrition to a healthy body
- discuss methods of preventing and controlling accidents in various situations
- demonstrate an understanding of risk assessment and decision making in making healthful lifestyle choices
- identify and describe the health services available in the community.

Human Sexuality

This theme emphasizes the individual nature of change, growth and the importance of one's family and personal values with respect to sexuality and sexual decision making. This unit is addressed within the context of Catholic teaching.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty
- understand the process of reproduction and birth
- discuss the purpose and function of contraception.

The lesson on contraception informs the student how each method works and the moral position of the Catholic Church on that method.

Alberta Education requires that all schools offer the Human Sexuality theme of the Health and Personal Life Skills program. Parents will be notified when this theme will be offered. Parents decide if their child will participate in the human sexuality component.

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Complementary Courses

In addition to required courses, junior high schools are required to offer two provincially authorized complementary courses. Complementary courses are offered in the areas of career and technology studies, environmental and outdoor education, fine and performing arts, religious or ethical studies, and languages other than English. The range of complementary courses offered varies from school to school dependent on such factors as student and parent preferences, facilities and staffing. Complementary courses are designed to reinforce the learning in required courses, and to provide opportunities for students to explore areas of interest and areas related to potential careers.

Career and Technology Studies

Career and Technology Studies (CTS) provides students with practical, hands-on learning experiences in the area of personal interest, general career exploration and applied technology. In CTS, students have the opportunity to use and apply technology effectively and efficiently to solve problems and produce usable products within a personally relevant career context.

The Career and Technology Studies program is organized into strands and modules. Schools select from 22 strands those modules that are most relevant for the students and the community. A strand is a group of modules that support a wide range of career and occupational opportunities within one particular category. A module defines what students should know and be able to do and, in general, takes about 25 hours to complete, although some students may need less or more time. Students progress through a sequence of modules completing more challenging projects and activities as they go. In senior high school, students can build on what they learned in junior high school, developing career-specific skills that will help them make a smooth transition into adult roles in the family, community, workplace or further education.

The 22 Career and Technology Studies program strands are:

- Agriculture
- Career Transitions
- Communication Technology
- Community Health
- Construction Technologies
- Cosmetology
- Design Studies
- Electro-Technologies
- Energy and Mines
- Enterprise and Innovation
- Fabrication Studies
- Fashion Studies
- Financial Management
- Foods
- Forestry
- Information Processing
- Legal Studies
- Logistics
- Management and Marketing
- Mechanics
- Tourism Studies
- Wildlife

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The CTS program offered in each school will vary depending on student and parent wishes, staff and facilities. Parents are encouraged to visit their local school to determine which CTS modules are being offered.

Students in Career and Technology Studies are expected to:

- develop skills that they can apply in their daily lives now and in the future
- refine career planning skills
- develop technology-related skills
- enhance employability skills
- apply and reinforce learnings developed in other subject areas.

Fine and Performing Arts

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the fine arts curriculum can be used to understand the religious dimensions of art, liturgy, music and history. They are also used directly to enhance the religious and spiritual culture of the school, and to celebrate the various liturgical feasts of the year.

Art

In art, students are expected to learn how to express their personal feelings and intuitions and to become art critics. To achieve this, students are expected to use traditional and contemporary tools, materials and media, to think like artists, to value the art creation, and to value the art form. The expectations for art are the same for students in grades 7, 8 and 9. Students are expected to demonstrate increased levels of performance during the three years in junior high school.

Three areas—drawings, compositions and encounters—provide the framework for the junior high art program.

By using a variety of materials and techniques, students are expected to:

- depict the visual world through drawing, painting and sculpting
- increase technical competencies in drawing, painting and sculpting
- develop competencies in composition and use of multiple media
- develop a vocabulary for critiquing their art work in a positive way
- use the proper vocabulary of art criticism

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- investigate natural forms and man-made structures as source subjects
- compare natural and man-made artifacts
- understand the impact of artistic expression on cultures and across cultures.

Drama

Drama encourages students to explore a variety of dramatic roles and develop a range of dramatic skills. Students set up a dramatic situation, act out the situation and reflect on the consequences. It is this reflection that provides the knowledge for self-development and improved performance. Through the five disciplines in the junior high drama program, students learn about the different forms and standards of drama and theatre.

The five disciplines are:

- **movement** – physical, nonverbal expression
- **speech** – exploration of talking and speaking to effectively communicate ideas
- **improvisation** – acting out of an idea or situation
- **theatre studies** – an introduction to the elements of drama and theatre
- **technical theatre** – stage construction and the use of sound, lighting, makeup, costumes, sets and props.

Music

Instrumental music, choral music and general music are the three distinctive, yet related, programs in the junior high music curriculum. Development in any of these programs requires student involvement as a performer, listener and composer.

The **instrumental** music program is designed to be a sequential and developmental approach to music instruction in either a wind percussion program or strings program.

The **choral** music program provides opportunities for students to develop and increase musical competency through singing, listening, creating and reading music.

The **general** music program covers a wide variety of musical areas from composition to performance, history and the basics of music.

The five main goals of junior high music are to enable students to:

- develop skills in listening, performing and reading music
- strive for musical excellence
- understand, evaluate and appreciate a variety of music styles
- develop self-expression, creativity and communication through music
- increase their awareness of the history of music and the role of music in their lives.

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Languages Other Than English

French as a Second Language

In Alberta, French as a Second Language (FSL) is a program in which the French language is taught as a subject, often between 20 and 40 minutes a day, to help students develop communication skills, language knowledge and cultural awareness in French.

Depending upon a school board's language policy, French as a Second Language in junior high schools may be offered as an optional program or it may be a compulsory program. School boards may begin the program at different grade levels, since the program is based on developing language proficiency over a grade or grades without being grade specific. Many schools start the elementary program in Grade 4, but others may not begin until Grade 7 or later.

The program is designed to teach students how to understand what they hear and read in French, and to communicate their ideas orally and in written form, using an approach that is based on real-life experiences and situations. Students will also acquire knowledge about local, provincial and national francophone groups to become more aware of their presence and to better understand them. Students learn the French language vocabulary and grammar through thematic activities and projects that are related to real-life language experiences. At the same time, students are taught specific language learning strategies that will help them become better second language learners.

The program is organized into three language proficiency levels—Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced. Each of these proficiency levels is then further divided into three sublevels. In junior high schools, students start at the Beginning Level and progress through the Beginning 1, Beginning 2 and Beginning 3 sublevels. It could take students one or more school years to reach a particular language proficiency level, depending upon when the students start the program and how much time is given to French instruction in the school.

Students entering junior high school may either begin their French language experience or they can continue developing their language proficiency, depending upon the level that was attained in elementary school.

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For those students starting French in junior high, the language content is based upon the concrete experiences of junior high students. These experiences provide a real-life context for understanding ideas in French and for communicating similar ideas. Each level has its own set of experiences that fall into the following areas:

Beginning 1

- School
- People Around Us
- Weather
- Animals
- Holidays and Celebrations

Beginning 2

- Community
- Clothing
- Exercise
- Food
- Housing

Beginning 3

- Activities
- Vacations
- Fine Arts
- Trades and Professions
- Hygiene and Safety

As students work through these experiences, they develop their ability to understand and communicate in French. At the end of each level, the students must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

Beginning 1

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as the temperature in a weather forecast.

The ability to talk about concrete ideas, using simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, and to ask simple questions. For example, students could talk about their family by naming the members of the family, giving their ages and birthdays.

Beginning 2

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as understanding directions to the corner store, and to understand simple reading texts, such as understanding the main food items on a menu.

The ability to talk and write about concrete ideas, using simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, and to ask simple questions. For example, students could provide their address, telephone number and order pizza over the telephone. They could also write a simple note to describe their house to a pen pal.

Beginning 3

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as a recorded message of flight departure times, and to understand simple reading texts, such as the safety rules on a safety week poster.

The ability to talk and write about concrete ideas, using a number of simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, ask simple questions, give information and simple advice. For example, students could telephone a travel agency to ask for prices for different travel destinations. They could also write a simple announcement for the school's Night of Music concert to promote it in the community.

Once students have attained a Beginning Level 3 language proficiency, they then move into the next proficiency level, which is Intermediate Level 4.

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At the Intermediate level, the following set of language experiences are developed:

Intermediate 4

- Health and Exercise
- Holidays and Celebrations
- Clubs and Associations
- Shopping
- Senses and Feelings

Intermediate 5

- Close Friends
- Fashion
- Social Life
- Outdoor Activities
- Advertising

Intermediate 6

- World of Work
- Trips, Excursions or Student Exchanges
- Money
- Role of the Media
- Conservation and the Environment

At each of these levels, the students work through these experiences to continue developing their ability to understand and communicate in French.

At the end of each level, the students must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

Intermediate 4

The ability to understand main ideas and some details contained in listening and reading texts that are familiar and somewhat predictable, such as understanding some key ideas given in a radio program concerning someone's feelings, or understanding the main ideas and some details contained in travel brochures in order to decide which place would be the most appropriate for a school trip.

The ability to talk and write about concrete topics, using simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, or to give or ask for information or advice. For example, students could talk about their club on a radio talk show and invite people to join, or they could write about what they are feeling in a journal entry.

Intermediate 5

The ability to understand main ideas and most details contained in listening and reading texts that are familiar and somewhat predictable, such as understanding almost all of the key ideas and most details presented in a fashion show, or understanding all the main ideas and most of the details contained in an article discussing simple survival techniques.

The ability to talk and write about concrete topics, using simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, to give or ask for information or advice, or to narrate events in the past. For example, students could talk about their friends and what friendship means to them, or they could write a letter to a francophone pen pal.

Intermediate 6

The ability to understand all main ideas and almost all of the details contained in listening and reading texts that are somewhat familiar but less predictable, such as understanding almost all of the key ideas and most details presented in a televised interview on how to be successful in a job interview, or understanding all the main ideas and most of the details contained in an article discussing an environmental project.

The ability to talk and write about mostly concrete but sometimes abstract topics, using a series of simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, to give or ask for information or advice, or to narrate events in any tense. For example, students could simulate carrying out a job interview or they could write a formal letter to a company on its environmental practices.

Once students have attained the Intermediate 6 language proficiency level, they then move into the Advanced Level 7 in senior high school.

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German

This is a two-year, German second language program for junior high school students and is designed to develop effective communication skills in German, as well as develop cultural awareness. It can be taken in Grade 7 and Grade 8, or in Grade 8 and Grade 9.

Upon completion of the program, students are expected to:

- demonstrate their understanding of familiar questions, statements and instructions
- speak with reasonably correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation
- reply with an appropriate answer to commonly asked questions and simple questions
- participate in a simple conversation directed by the teacher
- read for specific information and ideas within the range of their personal learning experiences and interests
- write familiar German, by:
  - copying
  - writing phrases from memory and dictation
  - composing simple statements and questions
  - answering questions in a controlled or guided context
- demonstrate awareness of the cultural implications of certain common linguistic forms.

Ukrainian

Ukrainian Language Arts

Ukrainian Language Arts is offered as part of the Ukrainian bilingual program and is designed for native speakers of Ukrainian and for students who speak other languages and wish to learn Ukrainian. The bilingual program begins in Kindergarten and goes through to Grade 12.

Students are expected to:

- obtain specific information from teacher-selected sources
- recognize how to express personal feelings, ideas and opinions
- organize and present, effectively, information of interest to their peers
- share feelings; share and support ideas and opinions
- respond personally to a variety of literary forms
- use literature and other art forms to reflect creatively upon experiences of general interest
- recognize and be sensitive to differences or similarities in cultures
- recognize the contribution of the lifestyle of Ukrainians to the wider community.

Ukrainian as a Second Language, Six-year Program

The Ukrainian as a Second Language, six-year program, is designed for students who wish to learn to communicate with others in Ukrainian and to preserve Ukrainian language and culture. The program begins in Grade 7 and goes through to Grade 12.

Students are expected to:

- ask and state something about a person, such as place of birth or age
- express completed actions with regular verbs and an action in the immediate future
- give commands
- ask and state possession, using possessive pronouns
- state and describe weather conditions
- count from 1 to 1000
- ask or state how someone performs an action, when something takes place and the frequency of an action.

Other Languages

Locally developed language courses are available for Arabic, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Polish and Spanish. Contact your school board office for information about which language programs it offers.

Native Languages

Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are designed to enable students to learn Native languages and to increase awareness of Native cultures.

Students are expected to:

- learn basic communication skills in Blackfoot or Cree
- develop cultural sensitivity and enhance personal development
- develop originality and creativity
- develop a desire to improve their competency in Blackfoot or Cree.

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Other

Environmental and Outdoor Education

In environmental and outdoor education, students learn to understand the consequences of human actions on environments. The course can be offered as a single course or as a sequence of courses.

Following completion of the course(s), students are expected to demonstrate:

- the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required for safe and comfortable experiences
- understanding, respect and appreciation for themselves and others
- awareness and appreciation of living things
- understanding of basic ecological processes
- skill, judgement, confidence and sensitivity in a range of environmentally responsible activities in outdoor settings
- the ability to investigate the effects of human lifestyles on environment
- lifestyle strategies that encourage responsibility for local and global environments.

Ethics

The ethics course is designed to help students become contributing, ethical and mature persons. The aim of the course is to help students become more thoughtful, to think of the interests of others, and to see ethical implications in their daily lives.

Students are expected to learn:

- working definitions of ethics and values
- decision-making skills
- about historical values and traditions
- about values of different cultural groups
- about their responsibility to their community.

Modules include:

- Winning and Losing
- Fairness and the Law
- Religion and Values
- Messages in Media.

Locally Developed Courses

School boards may develop courses to be innovative and responsive to local and individual needs. Contact the school to learn about locally developed courses available in your jurisdiction.

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French Immersion

French immersion is a program in which French is the language of instruction for a significant part of the school day. This program is designed for students whose first language is not French. Several subjects, or possibly all of them when students are in grades 1 and 2, are taught in French. The curriculum is identical to that offered in the regular English program. The major difference is that it is taught in French.

In addition to learning what is identified for courses such as mathematics, science and health, French immersion students also want to acquire full mastery of the English language, functional fluency in French as well as an understanding and appreciation of the French culture. Graduates of a French immersion program are able and willing to participate with confidence and competence in French conversations on a variety of topics. Should they so wish, they are able to take further education as appropriate to their abilities and interests with French as the language of instruction. Finally, they are able to accept employment where French is the language of work.

French immersion students perform well in all subject areas on system-wide and provincial tests. This finding has been replicated many times not only in Alberta but across Canada.

A guide for parents of students in French Immersion, *Yes, You Can Help*, is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre at 403–427–2767 or, outside of Edmonton, dial 310–0000 to be connected toll free.

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Feedback

Curriculum Handbook for Parents

Grade 8

We would like to know what you think about this handbook. Are you a:

_____ Parent

_____ Teacher (please indicate level) ___ Division 1, ___ Division 2, ___ Division 3

_____ School Administrator (please indicate level) ___ Division 1, ___ Division 2, ___ Division 3

_____ District Administrator

_____ Other (please specify) _____

1. I found this document:

   _____ extremely useful

   _____ useful

   _____ somewhat useful

   _____ not very useful.

2. What could be done to make this document more useful?

   _____

   _____

3. Other comments and suggestions:

   _____

   _____

   _____

Thank you for your feedback.

Please send your response to:

Director, Curriculum Standards Branch
Alberta Education
11160 Jasper Avenue
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